

The Grocery Trip by TheMikeWheelers (jasongracefully)

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Summary:

One week after Will came back from the Upside Down, a conversation with Mike sends Hopper to the grocery store, looking for supplies to find a certain someone who might be in Hawkins

The Grocery Trip

Hopper tapped his foot against the ground. He had two boxes of Eggos in hand, but the line at Bradley's Big Buy wasn't moving fast enough. Only one register was open. Hop recognized the cashier as Dave, one of the workers that he had to interview just a week ago as part of the "investigation" on the alleged preteen to steal waffles from this store. Funny how things worked out, as now Hopper was trying to find that same girl.

He got to the front of the line and dumped the Eggos on the checkout belt. Dave didn't seem to give him a second thought, or make any connection between Hopper's purchases and what he was investigating last time he was here. "Your total is \$2.31, do you want a receipt?" Hopper grumbled a quick no, and handed him the cash. He shoved the boxes into a bag and walked out of the store, taking a moment to examine the new doors they must have just installed.

Back in his car, Hopper dropped the shopping bag into the passenger seat. He turned around to glance at the wooden box in the backseat he'd picked up from the hunting store, and thought back to the conversation that had brought him to this moment.

It had been a week since he and Joyce managed to bring Will back from the Upside Down, a fact that Hopper was still wrapping his head around, but there was work to be done and secrets to be kept. No one could know the truth of what happened, so there he was, typing out a fake report on how Will Byers had miraculously returned to his home, simply knocking on the door to be let in after getting lost for a week. Missing person case closed.

Will going missing has been the most eventful thing to happen to Hawkins in years, but now that he was back, the town had returned to its mundane routine quicker than ever. Hopper wasn't expecting anyone to come to the station that day, yet there was Flo, was knocking on his office door, saying something about a visitor. Before he could ask who it was, that Wheeler kid rushed in.

Hopper didn't know much about the kid. He was friends with Will, and the more sensitive part of Hop wondered how Mike had been

holding up with all of this, but he didn't have much time to speculate before Mike spoke up.

"Eleven's alive. I know she is. I saw her."

Hopper sighed, and gave a quick rub to his temples before giving in.

"Close the door, kid. Then let's talk."

So they did. Mike recounted everything he saw the night she disappeared, and how he was *positive* he saw her outside his window that night. None of his friends believed him, and after a week of searching on his own, he knew he needed more help.

Hop wasn't sure what to make of the story. Mike seemed to be convinced he saw her, but from what he knew, it seemed like the girl was gone. Exploded into the air, and not about to be found anytime soon. Mike didn't seem like one to lie, but he was a kid, and if there was one thing Hopper knew as a cop, it's that kids aren't the most reliable sources. Especially confused, traumatized kids with a dead friend.

So with that being the case, Hop had no clue why he was in the position he was now, having assured Mike he'd do his best to look, and buying waffles (which Mike had told him were her favorite) just in case. He had no reason to believe Mike's story, and every reason to accept that the girl was gone, but there was something telling him to see it through. Something he chalked up to police intuition, but deep down had a feeling was something more.

Taking one more look at the wooden crate and the bag of Eggos, Hopper sighed. He shifted the car into drive, and left the parking lot, making the familiar drive towards Joyce's house, to the road Mike had called "Mirkwood," where Eleven was apparently found the first time.

Hopper didn't know why he was so sure of it, but a voice in his head told him it was true. This girl was out there, alive, and somewhere in Hawkins. And he was going to find her.